

# EXHIBIT C



*Sciences  
Engineering  
Medicine*

## Committee on Human Rights

May 1, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

As Chair of the Committee on Human Rights (CHR) of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and National Academy of Medicine, I am writing regarding the situation of Kseniia Petrova, a Harvard Medical School researcher.

The CHR—composed of members of the three National Academies—has worked for nearly half a century to support at-risk scientific colleagues around the world. Individuals whom we have assisted include those who have been arbitrarily detained in connection with their scientific work. We also provide assistance to colleagues who have fled their country after experiencing persecution and are seeking to pursue their research elsewhere, most often in the United States.

I was deeply dismayed to learn about the situation of Ms. Petrova, a talented scientist who has been conducting medical research in the United States for the past two years. It is my understanding that, while returning to the United States from a trip to France on February 16, she failed to declare frog embryos she was bringing from a French laboratory at the request of her supervisor. The embryos were non-living, embedded in paraffin, and incapable of growing or transmitting disease. (Similar material can be found in high school and college biology laboratories throughout the United States.) I am concerned that Customs and Border Protection officers canceled Ms. Petrova's J-1 visa based on a customs violation that, to my understanding, does not carry any immigration penalties. I am particularly alarmed that she remains detained to this day, and that her application for parole has been denied twice, citing concerns that she poses a threat to national security and is a flight risk.

Far from being a danger to the community, Ms. Petrova has made significant contributions to the United States through her research. She is an exceptionally accomplished bioinformatician working on early cell development—research that is essential for understanding how cells and organisms develop, grow, and age, and how these processes go awry in diseases, including cancers. Ms. Petrova's unique skills in computer-aided design and analysis of biological experiments have been important for Harvard Medical School's NIH-supported project from the

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500 Fifth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001  
[chr@nas.edu](mailto:chr@nas.edu) | [www.nationalacademies.org/chr](http://www.nationalacademies.org/chr)

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National Institute on Aging on degenerative disease and how tissues age. With Ms. Petrova's outstanding contributions, the research group has perfected a combined microscopic and computer-based image analysis that experts believe will be used for many applications in the study of degenerative disease. The first specific application has focused on kidney damage.

Many of us conducting research at universities across the country are deeply concerned about the treatment of Ms. Petrova. Like other talented international researchers, she brings important skills and talents to our country that enrich our labs, spark innovation, and advance research and development. I fear that, because of Ms. Petrova's situation and intensified immigration actions in recent months targeting international scholars and students, some of our accomplished international researchers will decide they must leave the United States and others will be dissuaded from pursuing scientific careers here.

I sincerely hope that Ms. Petrova will be able to return to her important scientific research as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Chalfie, Ph.D.  
CHR Chair  
(2008 Nobel Laureate, Chemistry)